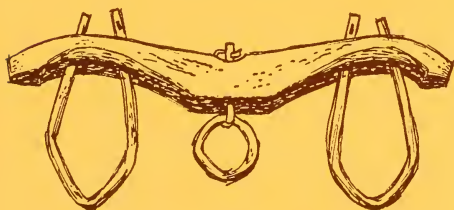


JOHN TYLER
and
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY
LYON GARDNER TYLER

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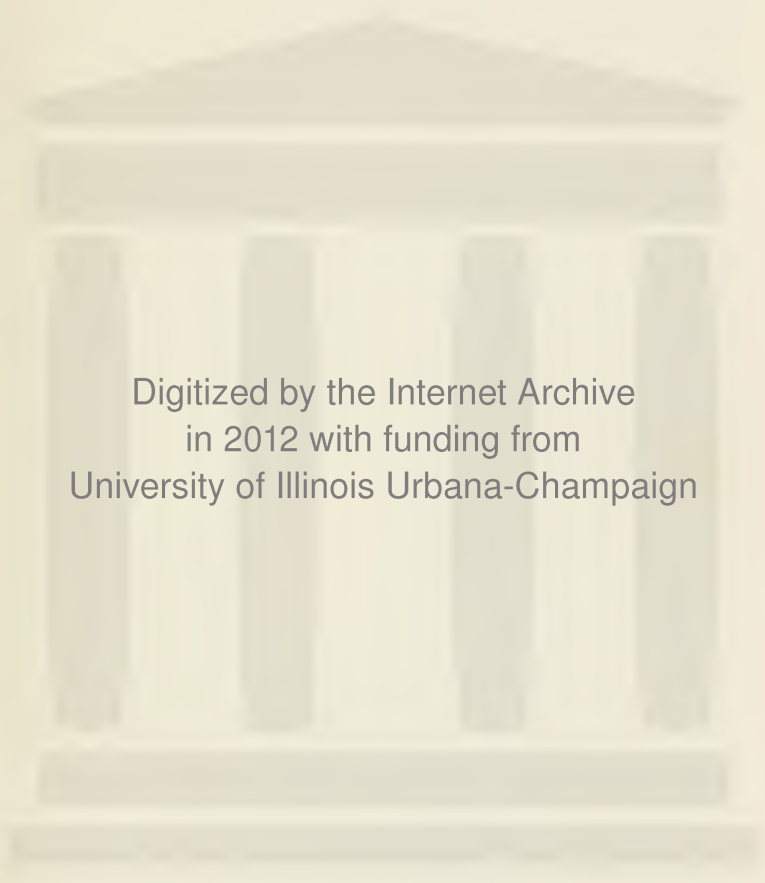
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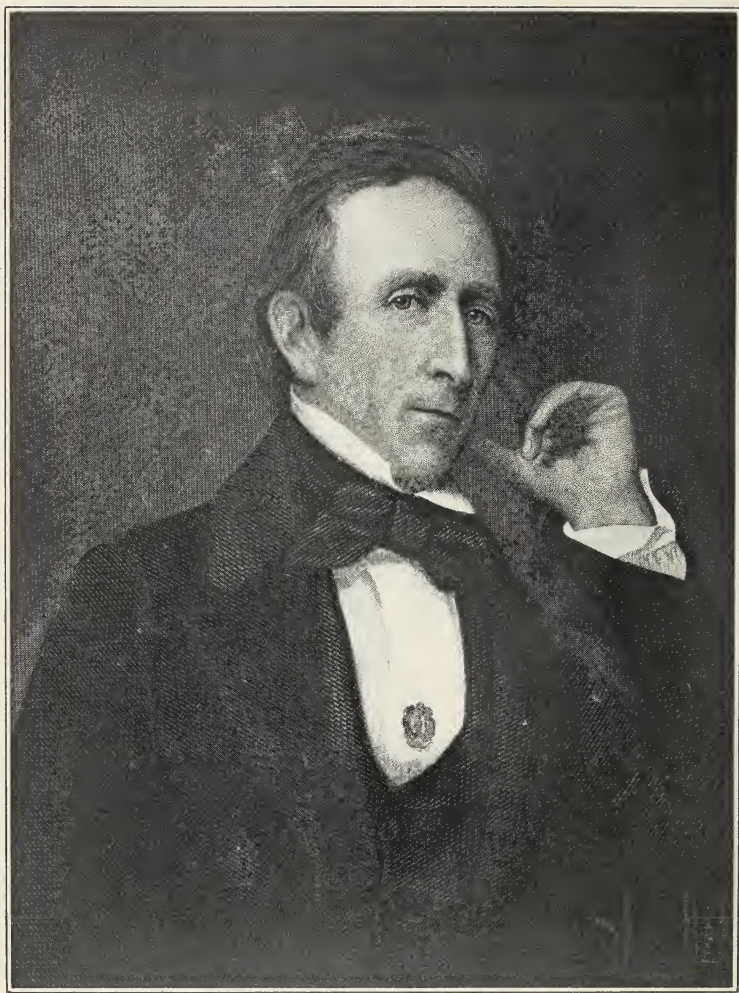
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Tenth President of the United States
1841-1845

Painted by Healy.

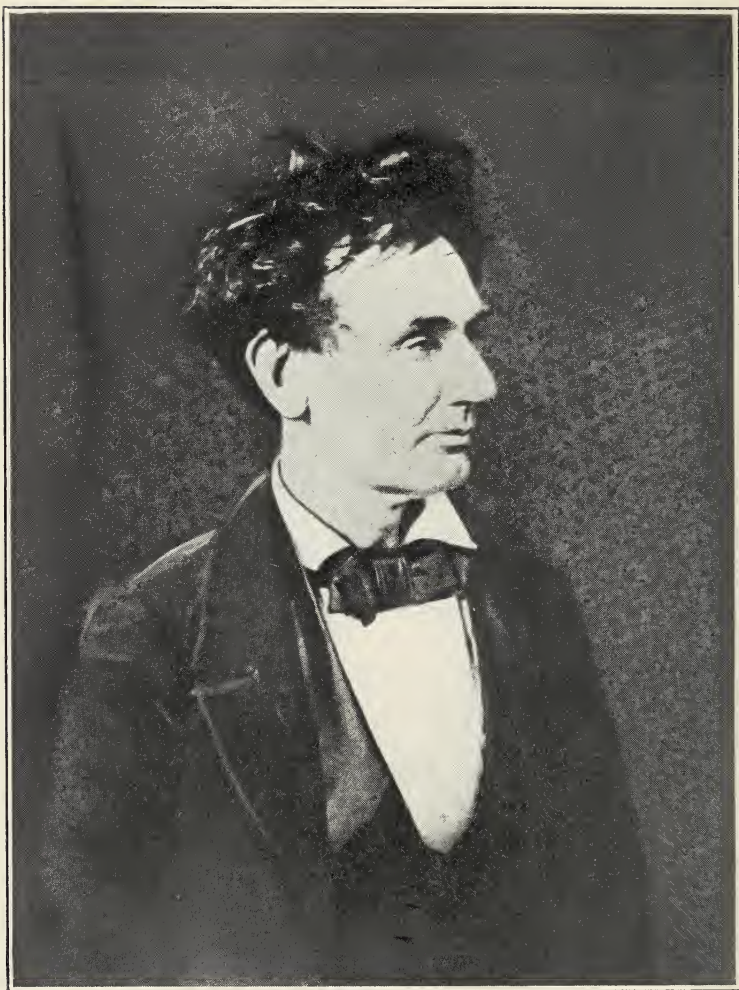
JOHN TYLER
and
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WHO WAS THE DWARF?

A REPLY TO A CHALLENGE

BY
LYON GARDINER TYLER

1929
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Sixteenth President of the United States
1861-1865

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Tyler versus Lincoln¹

A Letter Replying to an Attack of *Time*,
a New York Periodical.

By Lyon Gardiner Tyler.

To the Editors of *Time*:

Sirs:

In your article "Tyler versus Lincoln" (April 9) you seek to discredit certain criticisms made by me on Lincoln by attacking and underrating another President, who died long ago and of course had nothing to do with my remarks. Your sarcastic comments on "Son Tyler's" father show that you have not kept up with the historical advance, for had you cared to read "The Whig Party in the South" by A. C. Cole, and the "Origins of the Whig Party", by E. Malcolm Carroll, scholars who have made special investigations in contemporary history, you would have learned that the Whig party was a party made up of many distinct elements (1834-1841) united for different reasons in opposition to Jackson and Jacksonian Democracy; that Tyler was not a Democrat adopted by the Whigs, but that he had as good standing in the Whig party as any other Whig; that his nomination in 1839 was a natural consequence of his distinction as a statesman, and of his nomination as vice-president in 1835; and that the measures which he vetoed as President were not Whig measures at all.

The measures he vetoed were the Bank bills and the protective

¹The above letter contains the substance of another published in *Time*, a New York weekly periodical, (June 4, 1928) under the same title. The Editors were generous in allowing space, but the limitations of their paper would not permit the extended article which appears here.

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tariff bills, and neither of these kinds of bills was advocated by the Whigs in the canvass of 1839-40. Indeed, they adopted no platform, and were predominantly for States-Rights as against the Democratic party, which under Jackson had been predominantly for a centralized government. Moreover, Tyler's efforts for peace in 1861 exclude the idea that he could have had any "embitterment" against the government, on account of any party quarrel twenty years before. His published letters show how genuine was his distress over the condition of the country previous to secession.

But you say that compared with Abraham Lincoln, John Tyler was "historically a dwarf". By this you challenge a comparison, and the comparison, which would not otherwise be made, is not declined. Language is only relative, and it depends entirely upon what you choose to consider a dwarf, whether Mr. Tyler was one or not. David appeared in stature a dwarf compared with Goliath of Gath, but otherwise he proved himself Goliath's superior. If we take mere reputation, Gene Tunney, the prize fighter, is probably better known than even Abraham Lincoln. Certainly many circumstances independent of himself conspired in favor of Lincoln to make him better known than any other president. He was a man forced into the centre of a storm which beat about him. His unfortunate death excited immense sympathy. He represented a party that was responsible for the cataclysm of war, and was victorious. He represented a section that had all the wealth and power, and so the enormous propaganda which rose in his favor made Lincoln out to be a saint for Christianity, a Solomon for wisdom, and a Julius Caesar for war, when he was no one of the three. On the other hand, John Tyler was unfortunate in three ways—first, in incurring the enmity of his party; second, in entertaining views of the nature of the government not at all acceptable to Republican writers, who have done nearly all the writing; and third, in being identified with a country which was bruised and maimed and silenced by a dreadful war. The propagandist with his trumpet was conspicuously absent in Tyler's affairs.

If this were all, Tyler would have no case, but the appeal is to history, and real history cares nothing for the blare of trumpets

and the shouts of the propagandists—it cares only for facts. Its rules are those of the law courts; and the only testimony it regards is concrete measures, the good words of the enemy, one's own confessions, the confessions of one's friends and the evidence of completely disinterested persons—all contemporaries. What an enemy says in detraction, or a friend says in praise, is of no particular value in the forum of history unless supported by other and disinterested evidence. Tested by these rules Lincoln's figure dwindles till he becomes the most vulnerable of all the presidents, one with whom John Tyler needs fear no comparison.

Taking democracy as an element in the comparison, it is too often supposed that lowliness of birth is evidence of greater democracy. But as has been aptly remarked by an able writer,² "the man of lowly birth can be no more than a democrat, and it is no particular credit to him that he is. But the man of aristocratic birth, who has the privilege and opportunity to be more than a democrat, and yet who remains such, not only in simulation but at heart, can truly claim the title of being a great democrat". In conducting the war Lincoln talked about "democracy" and "the plain people", but adopted the rules of despotism and autocracy, and under the fiction of war powers virtually suspended the Constitution. This surely cannot be said of John Tyler, as president, who, though of parentage much higher in the social scale than Lincoln, was a much greater democrat, since he professed faith in the Constitution and would not violate it, even at the dictation of his party.

Some things are so plain that even an enemy's characterization of them may be accepted. Old Ben Wade condemned Lincoln's amnesty proclamation of December 8, 1863, offering to take back into the Union any State, when one-tenth of its people swore loyalty and petitioned for admission: "Talk not to me of your ten per cent principle," he exclaimed. "A more absurd monarchical and anti-American principle was never announced on God's

²Paul S. Whitcomb in *Lincoln and Democracy* in Tyler's Quarterly for July, 1927, and in Minor, *The Real Lincoln*, Appendix.

earth." To ignore nine-tenths of the people of a State and to except from the benefits of his pardon all persons in the South who had any reputation for ability or intelligence was certainly not democracy, nor even clemency.

Both Tyler and Lincoln were lawyers, but their ways were far apart. His enemies filled the newspapers with abuse and detraction, but they were never able to advance any imputation against Tyler of shady or tricky conduct as a lawyer. Had there been any such thing, it would assuredly have come to light. Indeed nobody ever put the true philosophy of life in better words than Mr. Tyler did when he wrote³ to his daughter in 1831: "Morality is true wisdom and the foundation of true happiness, and its fountain flows from the Creator himself and is manifested on earth by the practice of all the virtues." Such a creed hardly agrees with the story accredited to Lincoln by an intimate friend⁴ that in a murder case he rebutted the testimony and discredited a witness (who said he saw the killing in the light of the moon,) by waiving in the face of the jury—not too close however—an almanac of the year before showing that on that particular night there was no moon. Apologists for Lincoln have questioned this story, but its popular circulation at all shows that he was not believed to be particularly scrupulous.

Nor as politicians were their courses very similar. Mr. Tyler appreciated political advancement, but there is no evidence that he ever engaged in any low deal or intrigue to procure it. He had been brought up in the school of his father when the office sought the man, not the man the office, as was illustrated⁵ when a messenger in 1808 rode 30 miles from Richmond to "Greenway", the parental residence in Charles City County, Virginia, and roused Judge Tyler from his sleep at midnight to announce to him that he had been elected Governor of Virginia. His son spoke the language of truth, when in one of his letters he said that "he had never reached out his hand for any office", and all

³*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I. p. 429.

⁴*Lamon, Life of Lincoln*.

⁵*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, III. p. 22.

had come to him unsolicited. We know that both the Senatorship and the Vice-presidency had been forced upon him against his own modest opposition⁶. Can anything like this be said of Lincoln? According to his friends Lincoln had a great passion for office and was indifferent as to how he obtained his ends⁷ as a politician. Herndon tells⁸ how he and Lincoln tricked a Democratic newspaper in Illinois into publishing an article which was used with telling effect against the editor and the Democratic Party. "Lincoln joined in the popular denunciation, expressing great indignation that such a sentiment could find lodgment in any paper in Illinois, although he knew full well how the whole thing had been carried through." Other serious confessions from his friends are that he bargained for a seat in Congress⁹, that as a legislator, he "log rolled" the capital of Illinois from Vandalia to Springfield,¹⁰ that his nomination as president was secured¹¹ through promises by his managers of cabinet appointments, which Lincoln afterwards fulfilled; that to secure the admission of Nevada, he promised, in return for their votes, to three Congressmen lucrative appointments, one worth \$20,000.00 a year;¹² and that finally to secure renomination in 1864 he made use of the

⁶*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I. pp. 362-371; *Leigh's Letter* in *Tyler's Quarterly*, IX. p. 89.

⁷Herndon, *Life of Lincoln*, II. p. 375: "He was always calculating and always planning ahead. His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest."

⁸Herndon, *Life of Lincoln*, II. p. 370.

⁹Lamon, *Life of Lincoln*, I. p. 275; Levy, *Lincoln the Politician*, p. 121.

¹⁰Sanburg, *Life of Lincoln*, I. p. 194: "A few members voted for the bill because they liked Lincoln, but most of the votes came through trades, deals, log rolling".

¹¹Herndon says that Lincoln knew about these promises at the time. *Life of Lincoln*, III. p. 471.

¹²Charles A. Dana (assistant Secretary of War), *Recollections of the War*, pp. 175-178. Lincoln's death occurred soon after, and Dana urged Johnson to carry out Lincoln's promises, but Johnson declared that "such agreements tended to immorality", and did not do so.

army and of fictitious states, and other questionable means¹³; and to get rid of his chief competitor for the presidency, Salmon P. Chase, he promised¹⁴ to appoint him Chief Justice, who though an expert financier had no great reputation at the time as a lawyer. Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, writes in his *Diary* December 15, 1864: "Chase's appointment gives satisfaction to Senator Sumner and a few others; but there is general disappointment. * * * The President told Chandler of New Hampshire, who remonstrated against such selections, that he would rather have swallowed his buckhorn chair than to have nominated Chase."

Mr. Tyler had back of his accession to the presidency a larger public experience than almost any of the presidents, having served through thirty years as state legislator, state councillor, member of the House of Representatives, Governor of Virginia, twice elected United States Senator, member of the State Convention in 1829-30, president pro tem of the United States Senate, nominated for the vice-presidency in 1835 and nominated and elected vice-president in 1840. Besides these offices he had been the recipient of numerous side offices attesting his prominence—such as Rector of William and Mary College, President of the Virginia Branch of the African Colonization Society, &c. Mr. Lincoln's experience in office up to the time he was nominated for President by a deal at Chicago in 1860, was a few terms in the Legislature of Illinois and one term as Congressman.

This brings us to their service as Presidents. Both were confronted with war when they took office. In 1841 the menacing feature was Great Britain, supported by France and Mexico. Had war ensued "the Union" in the language of Hunter, of Virginia, "would have been encircled with a wall of fire." The South was exasperated under abolition attacks, and the Cotton States may

¹³Minor, *The Real Lincoln*, Chap. XXVII—"How Lincoln got himself elected"; Nicolay *Life of Lincoln* p. 490.

¹⁴McClure, *Lincoln and Men of Wartime*, pp. 123 et seq; Warden, *Life of Chase*, pp. 630 etc; Minor, *The Real Lincoln*, p. 212; Rhodes Hist. U. S., V., p. 45; Pierce, *Sumner* IV. p. 207.

have struck for independence¹⁵; but by successful diplomacy the contest with Great Britain for dominion over this continent and the Pacific Ocean was decided in favor of the United States, and the country emerged from all its difficulties, at the end of Tyler's term, as a world power, without any bloodshed or war whatever.

One of the important factors in this result was the great treaty of Washington in 1842, which settled the boundary for 2000 miles on the North and closed the trouble with Great Britain over the right of search, the question of impressment and the affairs of the *Caroline* and *Creole*. Mr. Webster is a particularly valuable witness, because, being Secretary of State (1841-1843), he knew the facts, and yet was a Northern man and out of sympathy with the States-Rights views of President Tyler. He does not hesitate to say¹⁶ that it was the President's happy tact which prevented the British Ambassador from abandoning the negotiations altogether and that "the negotiations proceeded from step to step and day to day under the President's own immediate supervision and direction". Another important factor was his enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine against the interference of Great Britain and France in the affairs of the Hawaiian Islands, and those of Texas, which led to the establishment of a virtual protectorate over the one and the annexation of the other, making possible the acquisition of California and New Mexico. In annexing Texas it was the first time that section of the Constitution permitting Congress to admit new states was applied to territory outside of the Union. Many years later President McKinley used Tyler's method to annex the Hawaiian Islands, whose independence Tyler had assured.

A third important factor to be mentioned was the dispatch of John Charles Frémont's expedition to the West, making known

¹⁵Judge Abel P. Upshur, then (1842) Secretary of the Navy and afterwards Secretary of State, wrote: "A war at this time would cause the overthrow of the government, the disruption of the Union, and, if England be wise, the establishment of a Southern Confederacy."—*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 227.

¹⁶*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 218; Curtis, *Webster* II. p. 105 note; Niles Register 64, p. 79; Tyler's Quarterly, III. pp. 255, 256; William and Mary College Quarterly, XXV. pp. 1-8.

the passes of the Rocky mountains, and a fourth the first treaty with China, which opened the Orient to American trade and enterprise.

There was no war in 1841-1845, and Tyler's successful negotiation contrasted with Lincoln's conduct in 1861, who, with secession staring him in the face, made no attempt to aid Tyler's peace efforts as Virginia Commissioner to Buchanan or as President of the Peace Convention which met in Washington in February, 1861. Those efforts were to keep the two sections from proceeding to violence and to secure the adoption of the Crittenden Resolutions.

These Resolutions, offered in Congress by John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, proposed to keep the Union intact by extending the line of the Missouri Compromise through the territory of the United States, "now held or hereafter acquired". They gave everything to the North except New Mexico, and New Mexico was totally unfitted to become a slave holding community by reason of its geographical character, "not ten slaves having been introduced there in ten years".¹⁷ As to any "after acquired territory" that contingency was so remote that no sensible person would have taken the least note of it.

In refusing to submit to the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, the Republican platform contained a menace against the Court itself, and an adjustment which would stop intemperate agitation along this line and soothe the pride¹⁸ of the slave owners was what weighed most with John Tyler. As early as 1850 he had considered that the territories were lost to slavery; and in 1860 he condemned both factions in the Democratic party for breaking up the Charleston Convention on the

¹⁷Speech of Hon. William Kellogg, of Illinois.

¹⁸Henry A. Wise wrote August 15, 1856: "Our Southern politicians are not up to our Southern people in distrust of and dislike of the North. . . . There is a wonderful revulsion in the last year since the people have seen the tone of the North to be that of arrogance and the assumption of superiority". *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II, pp. 531, 532.

mere question of Squatter Sovereignty, which though wrong in principle he regarded as abstract and having no practical meaning.

The Southern senators promised their adhesion to the compromise, and a word from Lincoln, the president-elect, would have ensured its success, but that word never came. He had favored the enforcement of the fugitive slave act, and, when denounced by the abolitionists as a "slave hound", had excused himself on the grounds of the Constitution. With the dissolution of the Union imminent he might have plead, on the question of the Crittenden Resolutions, the seriousness of the situation, and the decision of the supreme court in the Dred Scott Case, which gave the South even more extensive rights than the proposed compromise. Instead of pursuing this course, Lincoln counselled against it, and on March 2, 1861, after the Republican majority had delayed the vote in every way possible, and after the Senators from the Cotton States had withdrawn, the resolutions were voted on and defeated in the Senate by 20 to 19.

Had the Union been preserved by this means, there would have been no shedding of blood, and slavery would have met its end in a natural and peaceful manner. There was an agency already at work promising to displace slavery. This was McCormick's great invention of the reaper, which proved an immense stimulus for the development of all kinds of agricultural implements, calculated in a short time to render hand labor, such as slavery was, useless and expensive.

In rejecting the Crittenden Resolutions, which, if submitted, would have received the overwhelming approval of the people of the United States, Lincoln a minority President, and the Republicans, a minority party¹⁹, placed themselves on record as virtually preferring the slaughter of 400,000 men of the flower of the land and the sacrifice of billions of dollars of property to a compromise,

¹⁹At the election in 1860, 1,866,352 had been cast in the North for Lincoln, while 1,954,227 had been cast for other candidates. The vote of the seceding states—ten in number—South Carolina voted through its Legislature—was 856,274, so that of a total vote of 4,676,853 Lincoln received about two-fifths.

involving a mere abstraction. The Union had been founded on compromise why not preserve it through compromise?

In a letter to Webster March 12, 1846, John Tyler referred with pardonable pride to their mutual labors: "The peace of the Country, when I reached Washington on the 6th of April, 1841, was suspended by a thread, but we converted that thread into a chain cable of sufficient strength to render that peace secure, and to enable the country to weather the storms of faction by which it was in every direction assailed." But no doubt had Mr. Tyler chosen, like Lincoln, to reject all compromises and involve the country in war with England, France and Mexico, and, at a vast expenditure of blood and money, won the war by the skin of his teeth, he would have been a much greater favorite with the jingoists and propagandists.

After Lincoln's inauguration his mind appeared to be in a kind of maze. The Confederate government sent commissioners to Washington to settle on equitable terms all questions of debts and boundaries, and Lincoln snubbed them and refused to see them formally or informally. Why should he not have received them? They represented eight millions of people and a territory greater than all Italy, France and Germany. He might have dismissed them promptly, but instead he suffered them to remain in Washington for a month, where they were fed with all kinds of assurances by his Secretary of State, William H. Seward, who, through Judge John A. Campbell of the Supreme Court of the United States, told them that the troops would be withdrawn from Fort Sumter and nothing prejudicial to the Confederates attempted at Fort Pickens in Florida.

It has been denied that Lincoln had any knowledge of these assurances, but the following facts seem to prove the contrary. Thus he states in his message of July 4, 1861, that a letter of Major Anderson who commanded at Fort Sumter, concurred in by General Scott, reduced the question of reinforcing the fort to a "mere matter of getting the garrison safely out of it." That he had accepted the necessity thereof and sought to save the question of policy by seeking to assert the national authority in some other

quarter, and so at once an order was directed to be sent for the landing of troops from the *Brooklyn* into Fort Pickens.

We know that this order went through General Scott on March 11th to Captain Vogdes, who commanded the troops on the *Brooklyn* and to Captain Adams, who commanded the Naval forces at Pensacola.

We also know that at a cabinet meeting March 15th, Lincoln asked the members whether, as a political measure, it was wise to attempt to "provision Fort Sumter" and all said no except two, one of whom was Blair the Postmaster General, who answered yes, and the other was Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, who gave a conditional affirmative. It was the opinion of Seward, Welles, Cameron, Smith and Bates, that the attempt to reinforce Fort Sumter would begin "a civil war".

Senator Douglas had said on March 11th, that Lincoln had assured him that Sumter would be evacuated as soon as possible, and Seward on March 21st, had defended his assurance to Campbell of March 15th, that the troops would be withdrawn in a few days, by declaring²⁰ to him on March 21st that the resolution "had been passed and its execution committed to the President". We are also informed that in anticipation of speedy action a paper was prepared for publication defending the government and putting the blame of the withdrawal on Mr. Buchanan²¹.

Francis P. Blair, indeed, states that the President told him after the Cabinet meeting of March 15th, that it had not been fully determined to withdraw the troops, but he thought that such would be the result. But as Blair was much opposed to the withdrawal we may readily believe that he gave a qualified interpretation to a positive statement.

It is difficult to understand how the Confederate Commissioners could have remained a whole month in Washington without Lincoln making some enquiry of Seward as to his communications with them. And on one occasion as Judge Campbell informs us, Seward in the midst of an important interview excused himself

²⁰Connor, *Life of John A. Campbell*, p. 126.

²¹William and Mary Quarterly, XXIV. pp. 75-85.

for the purpose of conferring with the President, before giving a final reply. And James Schouler, a friendly historian, does not hesitate to say that Lincoln must have been privy to all the promises of Seward.

Lamon, who was Lincoln's confidential friend, had the same view of the situation as Seward, and in an interview with Governor Pickens of South Carolina, he told him on March 25th, that the President "professed a desire to evacuate Fort Sumter", and upon his return to Washington he wrote Governor Pickens that he hoped to come back in a very few days to withdraw the command. When this was brought to Lincoln's attention on March 30th he denied that Lamon had "any power to pledge him by any promise or assurance", but he did not say that Lamon had incorrectly represented his previous attitude.

In the light of this and other evidence which might be added, it is much more reasonable to suppose that Lincoln knew and approved the assurances of Seward than that Seward acted on his own authority, misrepresented Lincoln's position and was not dismissed for the unheard of liberty he had taken. If Seward had the "swellhead", so had Lamon and Douglas. That Lincoln's mind was not in abeyance, but that there was a change from a course positively decided upon cannot be doubted. This change was for sometime lacking in a decided character, and Lincoln played on two strings.

The turning of the tide was manifested on the 29th when he ordered a squadron for the relief of Fort Sumter to be got in readiness by the 6th of April, "to be used according to circumstances". Three days later (April 1) Seward, after a conference with Lincoln, modified the conversations he had had with Judge Campbell by declaring to him that the government would not undertake to supply Fort Sumter without giving notice to Governor Pickens. The idea of withdrawing the troops was, however, still uppermost, for Seward expressed the belief to Campbell that no attempt at reinforcement would be made, and on April 2, Lincoln, at Seward's behest, set on foot negotiations with the Unionists in the Virginia Convention which contemplated a surrender of the Fort provided the Convention would adjourn *sine die*. Virginia's influence with the other Border States was supposed to be great.

Lincoln in his message of July 4, 1861, places his final determination to send the expedition to Fort Sumter upon his hearing of the failure of his former order of March 11th respecting Fort Pickens, but information of this did not reach him until April 6th, and before that time on April 4th, orders had been issued for the dispatch of the squadron. On that day, the Secretary of War, in an order in which he said that "succor to Fort Sumter" had been determined upon, appointed G. V. Fox who had planned the expedition to head the same. On the next day, still in the absence of information, the Secretary of the Navy appointed Samuel Mercer, commander of the Naval Forces and ordered him to be off Charleston bar with the *Powhatan* by April 11th. To which is added the fact that when Colonel John B. Baldwin, representing the Unionists in the Virginia Convention, presented himself in Washington on April 4th, at Lincoln's request, the latter told²² him that he "came too late"—the orders for the expedition being already issued.

The excuse made prominent in Lincoln's message of July 4th that his purpose was only to give bread to "the few and hungry men of the garrison", and not to land troops unless necessary for that end, was a political stroke which was entirely absent from his previous action of April 1, in regard to succors for Fort Pickens. There both men and provisions were to be landed at the same time. Moreover, the markets in Charleston were not closed to Anderson till the sailing of the Relief Squadron became known.

The determining influence on Lincoln appears to have been undoubtedly the tariff. There was a Confederate tariff from 10 to 20 per cent and a Federal tariff of from 50 to 80 per cent, and fears of the successful operation of the former excited fears in the bosoms of Lincoln and his Cabinet and the Republicans generally. Considering the enormous interests that centered around the tariff, and the fact that in 1833 the tariff question had actually pushed the country to the verge of war, this explanation is not at all unreasonable. As early as March 16th, Stanton, not yet aligned with

²²Southern Historical Society Papers, I. p. 443; IX p. 88.

the Republicans, had noted the apprehensions of that party, and the *New York Times* of March 30th had observed: "With us it is no longer an abstract question, one of Constitutional construction or reserved or delegated power of the States to the Federal Government, but of material existence and moral position both at home and abroad."

The apprehensions had grown, weakened the opposition in the Cabinet and induced Lincoln to take tentative action in ordering the preparations of a fleet for Fort Sumter. Final action was the result of the concourse at Washington of seven, or as others have it, of nine Governors of high tariff states, who waited upon Lincoln and offered him troops and supplies*.

In the interview with Baldwin on April 4, and in that with the delegates from the Virginia Convention on April 12, and in that with Dr. Fuller and the deputations from each of the five Christian associations of Baltimore, who spoke for peace, on April 22nd, Lincoln asked "And what is to become of my revenue, if I let the government at Montgomery, with their ten per cent tariff, go on."

The Confederate authorities complained of broken faith, and there is much to justify them. Frederick Bancroft, Seward's Biographer, does not try to absolve Seward, and how about Lincoln? He had promised notice to Governor Pickens of any attempt to reinforce Fort Sumter, but notice was not given until all preparations had been made and the first part of the Relief Squadron sailed from New York (April 8). Ten days are considered in law a reasonable notice, but Lincoln gave not one day.

The facts in regard to Fort Pickens are even more to the point, though they have been overshadowed by the clamor attending Fort Sumter.

At that place there was a truce existing between the Federal

*For the present of these governors see *Richmond Examiner* of April 10, *New York World* and *New York Herald* of April 5, Baldwin's Pamphlet in reply to Botts 1866, Crawford, *Genesis of the Civil War*, p. 340; Magruder in *Atlantic Monthly* XXXV, p. 438. See also Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, II. pp. 582 and Stephens, *War Between the States*, II. p. 354.

and Confederate authorities made during Buchanan's administration. Lincoln was aware of this truce, when he sent secret orders to Captain H. A. Adams who commanded the squadron lying off the Fort to land Captain Vogdes' company of soldiers on the *Brooklyn*, though he spoke of it in his message (July 4) as "a quasi-truce of the late administration, of which the present administration up to the time the order was dispatched had only vague and uncertain rumors."

By delays at sea the order which came through General Scott did not reach Captain Adams till March 31, and that officer flatly refused to pay obedience to it. In his letter next day to Welles, the Secretary of the Navy, he described the agreement which had been made, and "which both sides had faithfully observed" and declared that without an order from the Navy Department direct he could not take upon himself "the fearful responsibility of an act which seemed to render civil war inevitable."²³

Lincoln made no pretense that he was not informed of the armistice at Fort Pickens *after* March 11, but on March 31 he gave personal orders for an expedition under Col. Harvey Brown from New York to reinforce Fort Pickens, in conformity with a plan contrived by Captain Meigs, and on April 1 he sent the *Powhatan*, under Lt. D. D. Porter, with special orders to establish itself, contrary to the truce, within the harbor of Pensacola. This action was taken at the suggestion of Seward, the Secretary of State, though on March 21 this party had assured Judge Campbell that notice would be given of "any design to alter the existing status at Fort Pickens".

These expeditions were undertaken with great secrecy and on April 6 Captain Meigs wrote to Seward, "This is the beginning of the war, which every statesman and every officer has foreseen", and at sea he wrote that "the despatch and the secrecy with which the expedition has been fitted out will strike terror into the ranks of the rebellion".

Brown arrived at Pensacola on April 16, when the troops were

²³ See Vol. 4, Naval War Records, Series I, for this, and most other naval matters referred to in this letter.

landed. Porter arrived a few hours later. Porter disguised his ship and flew the British flag, but at the request of Brown who represented the Fort as in a deplorably weak condition, he refrained from entering the harbor, lest the Confederates, who still observed the truce, might be provoked to attack the Fort in its unprepared state.

On April 6, the letter from Captain Adams to Welles came to the latter's hands, and the same day the Secretary in his letter of reply expressed his regret that he had not acted and told him that it was the wish of the Navy Department that he should promptly land the troops from the *Brooklyn*. The dispatch was conveyed by Lieutenant John L. Worden, later commander of the *Monitor* in its fight with the *Merrimac*, who proceeded by land and gained access to Adams by assuring General Braxton Bragg, who was in the command of the Confederates at Pensacola that he had only "a verbal message of a pacific nature" to deliver to Captain Adams. Worden had at Welles suggestion destroyed the written despatch after committing its contents to memory, but the message, written or verbal violating the armistice was hardly of a "pacific nature". On the night of the day when the bombardment at Fort Sumter began (April 12) Adams, taking the Confederates unawares, landed the troops from the *Brooklyn*.

When this was brought to the notice of General Bragg on April 14, he tersely commented: "Lieutenant Worden must have given these orders in violation of his word, Captain Adams executed them in violation of our agreement."

On all fours with this questionable diplomacy was the action of G. V. Fox, who, on March 21, gained access to Fort Sumter by assuring Governor Pickens that he came on "a peaceable mission". And yet Fox says in his report four years later that he was sent to Fort Sumter to "strengthen" his plan to supply the fort, and states certain matters noticed there which made his plan seem "feasible." Fox had as queer an idea of "a peaceable mission" as Worden had of "a verbal message of a pacific nature".

On July 19, Congress called upon Lincoln for information regarding the "Quasi-armistice" mentioned in his message of July

4, and in reply Lincoln transmitted a letter from the Secretary of the Navy which stated that it was against the public interest to make report!

There are further facts at this time not at all redounding to the credit of Lincoln.

In obedience to orders Welles made ready the squadron against Fort Sumter. Fox was made commander of the expedition, and on April 5 Welles submitted to Lincoln the instructions to Captain Samuel Mercer appointed Naval Commander, containing a list of the boats to be employed. Among them was Mercer's ship the *Powhatan*, which Welles made the flagship of the proposed expedition.

Now the President, as we have seen, had selected the *Powhatan* for another duty, which was for an expedition to Fort Pickens. The orders were personally signed by Lincoln, and the preparation of the ship and its dispatch southward under Porter were to be kept secret from everybody, even Welles, the Secretary of the Navy. When the *Powhatan* sailed South, the astonished Secretary hastened to the President, who, making no apology for snubbing him, admitted a mistake and requested Seward to recall the *Powhatan*. Seward obeyed very unwillingly, and a dispatch signed by him reached Porter at sea, but that officer pleading previous Presidential orders declined to obey, and the *Powhatan* went on its way to Fort Pickens, with the result already noticed. And so the Relief Squadron reached Charleston bar without a flagship, a Naval Commander or instructions!

While these things were doing, other things occurred which presented Lincoln in an even more pitiful light. It is that of a President signing papers of a most important character without knowing their contents. One paper changed the commands of several persons in the Navy Department and another assigned certain duties to other persons whose loyalty Welles had good reason to suspect. When Welles who had not been consulted, protested, the President made the same submission as before, recalled the instructions and told him that these papers, with many others,

were hastily prepared and "he really knew not what he was signing"!²⁴

What does James Schouler, a friendly historian, say of this astonishing conduct? It is that Lincoln's behavior through the month of March, 1861, was as "though he had no policy and was waiting for his cabinet to form one for him"! What does Frederick Bancroft, the biographer of Seward, assert? "Lincoln's policy—or rather lack of policy—during the month of March (1861) cannot be successfully defended. It can only be explained and excused"! And yet this month was the crucial period of his administration, for the issue of peace and war was then decided. The idea of some of his admirers that his vacillating conduct regarding Fort Sumter was a well thought out manoeuvre to work up the North's fighting spirit is without any foundation.

Even supposing that the action of the Confederates was unprovoked, Lincoln was not bound to accept it as a gage of battle, as some of his admirers have appeared to think. He knew perfectly well that the Confederates in occupying the Fort had no desire to engage in a general war with the United States. All they wanted was a fort that held the capital city of South Carolina at Lincoln's mercy. Nor does every hostile act justify war, and in the World War this country submitted to having its flag filled full of holes and scores of its citizens destroyed, before it went to war. Lincoln, without any violation of his views of government, had an obvious alternative in putting the question of reinforcing Fort Sumter up to Congress, the war-making power. Congress could have been assembled in ten days, but it was not called till the country was hopelessly committed to war. In the meantime, Lincoln assumed both the powers of the Executive and Congress, and it was Lincoln's war.

There can be no question that Lincoln's resolve, after weeks of vacillation, to reinforce Fort Sumter, was a confession of bankruptcy in statesmanship. Force of the mass, and not skill of the individual, was called in to the settlement of questions, and the North having the superior power won the war, as it would prob-

²⁴Welles, *Diary*, I. p. 16-32; Welles, *Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward*.

ably have done under any President. But how near Lincoln came to losing the war is shown by his saying²⁵ that without the aid of the negro troops taken from the South's own population he would have to "abandon the war in three weeks." Towards the close of the war Lincoln became thoroughly discredited with the Northern people,²⁶ and it was only the victories of Sherman and Sheridan that reinstated him in their good opinion.

Throughout the war Lincoln danced from one position to another. We have seen that in March, 1861, Lincoln denied audience to the Confederate commissioners, and yet towards the close of the war he met Southern commissioners at Old Point. He had also practically decided to withdraw the troops from Fort Sumpter, but changed under the circumstances already described, when the tariff governors brought pressure upon him. He decided to issue a proclamation of emancipation in July, 1862, but when Seward, the Secretary of State, showed to him its impropriety at the time, he pocketed the paper and for months later talked on both sides of the question. He at first decided to write a paper justifying the action of Captain Wilkes in seizing the Confederate commissioners from the British steam packet *Trent*, but shortly united with his Cabinet in making a humiliating apology to Great Britain. He formulated a plan of reconstruction in his proclamation of Amnesty, December 8, 1863, but, when Congress formulated another one, he professed in another proclamation July 8, 1864 that he was not bound up to any single plan and would enforce that too, "if the loyal people of any State" wanted it. How two plans, having contradictory provisions, could have operated in harmony he never undertook to explain. In February, 1865, he recommended to his cabinet a plan of bringing the war to a close by paying the Southern people \$400,000,000 for their slaves. But

²⁵Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, II. p. 562.

²⁶See the memorandum August 23, 1864 where he admits it as "exceedingly probable that this administration will not be reelected". Ibid II. 568.

when the Cabinet refused to agree with him, Lincoln, instead of insisting on his view, humbly submitted.²⁷

Lincoln is said to have had a keen insight into human nature, but he did not show it in the appointment of such misfits as Halleck, Pope, Hooker and Burnside, Nor did he show it in this proposal made to his cabinet to pay the Southern people for their slaves. They would have scorned his proposal to pay them, as they were not fighting for the money value of slaves but in defense of their Fatherland and for self-government, as their Revolutionary fathers had fought. It is ridiculous to say that the Confederates fought for slavery, since they would not have fought at all if Lincoln had not made war upon them. Secession was not war. Norway seceded from Sweden, and there was no war.

Upon the evacuation of Richmond, Lincoln made haste to visit the city which had defied him so long. In his delight over the result he wrote a letter to General Weitzel, who had the command, "to permit the Virginia gentlemen who had acted as the legislature of Virginia" in support of the Rebellion to assemble at Richmond, and to take measures to withdraw the Virginia troops and other support from resistance to the general government. A few days later while the members were coming together, Lincoln, who had returned to Washington, sent a telegram withdrawing the permission. In a letter afterwards he stated that he had not given permission for the Legislature to assemble but only "those gentlemen who had acted as the Legislature", and that Lee's surrender rendered their coming together unnecessary.

But that this was a mere subterfuge is shown by the oft-repeated statements of Lincoln and Congress that the States could not secede and had the old legal status within the Union as soon as resistance ceased. A long official conversation with Mr. Lincoln a short time before the surrender of General Johnston's army had induced General Sherman to offer the liberal terms of surrender which he first agreed to. But Stanton, Sumner and Stevens held that the Southern States were conquered provinces, and the testimony of Lincoln's Cabinet Secretaries, Stanton and

²⁷Welles, *Diary*, II. p. 237.

Welles, is to the effect that Lincoln sent his telegram only **after** Stanton and Sumner's vehement protest, and in the very words that Stanton suggested. If this does not show that Lincoln had adopted the opinions of the Southern States as "conquered provinces", it does show that he would have made no or little resistance to the plans of the vindictives in Congress, had he lived to see the years of madness which followed the war. Woodburn, in his *Life of Thaddeus Stevens*, says (page 323) that "Lincoln had shown that he was not fixed beyond change in favor of any particular scheme of reconstruction" and "that no doubt he would have cooperated with Congress and the States in carrying out such a plan as Congress had proposed, if a change of circumstances had appeared to make his cooperation desirable." It is idle, therefore, to talk of what Lincoln might have done in the way of kindness to the South had he lived.²⁸ He had little of the backbone of Andrew Johnson.

His eulogists have laid much stress upon some nice utterances which Lincoln used in his messages, but these apart from his actual conduct have little substantive value. His course during the war is not encouraging. How any really merciful man could permit medicines to be made contraband of war it is difficult to understand. One of the finest opportunities furnished any man to show his merciful inclinations was afforded when a delegation of Andersonville prisoners arrived in Washington to pray that exchanges might be resumed. Their heart-rending petition was published in the New York and Washington newspapers, but Lincoln turned a deaf ear. When such was his treatment of his own people, it is not to be supposed that Lincoln would have been charitable to beaten rebels, if there had been any serious opposition in the way, as there would have been, of course, with Edwin M. Stanton in the Cabinet and Ben Wade, Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens and others like them in Congress. There is a letter of Lincoln to Major General Hooker, dated May 8, 1863, pub-

²⁸For all this see Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Welles, *Diary*, Woodburn, *Life of Thaddeus Stevens*, Connor, *Life of John A. Campbell*, etc.

lished in *War of Rebellion Records*, series I. Vol XXV, part II., p. 449, in which Lincoln exults in the story told him by General Willich, an exchanged prisoner, that, when the Federal calvary cut the roads in the vicinity of Richmond, the city was so undefended that our men could have safely gone in and "*burned everything* and brought in Jeff Davis."

The most fatal change of position made by Mr. Lincoln was his change of the character of the war, after the first year, from such as becomes a civilized nation into a campaign of wholesale riot and general outrage. Probably no army in an enemy's country, with the exception of Lee's in Pennsylvania, ever did less injury to non-combatants than McClellan's soldiers in the march from Old Point to Richmond. But on July 22, 1862, Stanton, the Secretary of War, with the approval of Lincoln, ordered the military commanders everywhere to appropriate private property, and no compensation, as required at International law, was provided for. Lincoln himself voiced this change in a declaration made at a cabinet meeting August 3, 1862 that "he was pretty well cured of any objections to any measure except want of adapt-
edness to put down the Rebellion".²⁹

In the cruelty of war thus decreed, Lincoln and his generals put it over the Germans in the World War³⁰.

The main features in this system of terrorism, as detailed in the "Official Records of the Rebellion", were (1) Shooting down

²⁹Diary of Salmon P. Chase.

³⁰The excuse I have often seen and heard advanced for this policy is that all war is Hell, which may be true, but Dante in his *L'Inferno* had a succession of Hells differing in torment, just as Mahomet had a succession of Heavens differing in happiness. And the difference between the Hells created by McClellan and Grant is given in Hon. George L. Christian's report to Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans, October 25, 1901 on the "Cause and Conduct of the War Between the States", L. H. Jenkins, Publisher, Richmond, Virginia. He says: "The writer's home was visited by the Army of the Potomac, both under McClellan and under Grant. At the time McClellan was in command, guards were stationed to protect the premises, with orders to shoot any soldier caught depredating, and but little damage was actually done; none with the consent or connivance of the commanding general

innocent non-combatants on small pretexts, burning of private homes, and wholesale destruction of private property³¹; (2) The expulsion from their houses of women and children and non-combatants, unless an oath of allegiance was taken. This was as if the German commanders had required every Frenchman in the occupied territory in France to swear allegiance to the Kaiser. (3) The subordination of the lives of prisoners to military success, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of prisoners on both sides.³² (4) The arrest of 38,000 persons in the North itself on bare suspicion of sympathy with the South, who were confined in damp and crowded dungeons and allowed neither trial nor attorney. Many died, and many were injured for life.

Both governments at first entered orders that prisoners should

But when the same army came, commanded by Grant, every house on the place, except one negro cabin, was burned to the ground; all stock and everything else of any value was carried off. The occupants were only women, children and servants; nearly all the servants were carried off; one of the ladies was so shocked at the outrages committed as to cause her death, and the other and the children were turned out of doors without shelter or food, and with only the clothing they had on. So that the writer has had a real experience of the difference between civilized and barbarous warfare."

³¹Christian, *Cause and Conduct of the War Between the States*.

³²In 1864 General Grant was made Commissioner of Exchange, and in a letter August 19, 1864, to Stanton, the Secretary of War, Grant wrote: "We ought not to make a single exchange or release a prisoner on any pretext whatever till the war closes. We have got to fight until the military power of the South is exhausted, and if we release or exchange prisoners captured it simply becomes a war of extermination." Lincoln stood by Grant, and when Welles, his Secretary of the Navy, in a letter dated Sept. 9, 1864, agreed with the Confederate government for a general exchange of Naval prisoners, Lincoln wrote Grant that Welles had acted without his knowledge and that he Grant was at liberty to arrest the whole operation, W. O. R. Series II. vol vii. p. 924.

Much stress has been laid upon Lincoln's tenderness to deserters from his armies, but Don Piatt, one of his warm friends, has said that there was much more of policy in Lincoln's course than mercy or humanity. It was questioned by many as unjust to those who hazarded their lives and fatal to the discipline of his armies.

receive the same fare as soldiers in the field. The Federal government is the only one on record for having reduced this by 20 per cent. This was done by the War department April 20, 1864 and on June 1 all but the sick were deprived of coffee, tea and sugar. This was followed by an order refusing all supplies by gift or purchase to Confederate prisoners (Rhodes, *United States* vol V., p. 505) In December, 1864, when some ladies of England asked permission of this government through Charles Francis Adams, the American minister at London, to distribute \$85000 among Confederate prisoners, Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, made refusal in terms as insulting almost to Mr. Adams as to the charitable ladies concerned. Seward had the "cheek" to resolve himself into a champion of the Southern people who, he said, would "rejoice" on "being saved by their considerate and loyal government" from the grave insult (i. e. the proposal to give them something to eat or wear) offered by the ladies in question. (William and Mary College Quarterly XXIII. p. 170). The field of mercy covers the whole war, and I have found no evidence of the humanitarian intervention of Lincoln with his cabinet officers or his generals in the field. None whatever.

That there must be no humanity in war was, according to Charles Francis Adams, the accepted policy of Lincoln's government, during the last stages of the war. (Adams, *Studies Military and Diplomatic*, p. 266.)

The policy of killing all the people of Georgia and repopulating that state was advocated³³ by General Sherman in a letter to Grant, March 9, 1864, and Lincoln declared on September 13, 1862 that "the possible consequences of insurrection and massacre in the Southern States" would not deter him from the use of the Emancipation policy.³⁴ In a letter to Andrew Johnson March

³³Sherman wrote: "Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless for us to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses and people will cripple their military resources * * * I can make the march and make Georgia howl." "Make the Valley a barren waste," and "hang every one of Mosby's men without trial," were telegraphic dispatches of Grant to Sheridan.

³⁴Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, II. p. 235.

3, 1863, he declared that "the bare sight of 50,000 armed and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once." "No human power" said³⁵ he, two years later, "can subdue this Rebellion without the use of the Emancipation policy and every other policy calculated to weaken the moral and physical forces of the Rebellion". Lincoln could not have pictured a case where self-government was more applicable.

It was without doubt the incapacity of Lincoln that prolonged the war. Lincoln never had any experience as an officer save in the Blackhawk war, when he was captain of a company of "generous ruffians". But the records show that he and his Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, were constantly interfering by telegrams and written messages with their generals, giving bad orders and making bad appointments. One blunder alone doubtless protracted the war two years. Upon the retirement of General McClellan to "Berkeley" or Harrison's Landing on James River, General Lee sent most of his army to attack Pope, who was advancing from Washington. This left Richmond with only 30,000 men, and General McClellan asked permission to attack that city.

But Lincoln fearful for his capital refused through Halleck to grant permission, and soon after removed McClellan from his command, and recalled his army. Unfriendly as the historian Rhodes³⁶ is to the memory of McClellan he admits that the move proposed by McClellan was "the most promising strategy of the whole campaign, both for the security of Washington and for positive results."

Lincoln was always urging his generals on to attack, whether they were prepared or not, and the administration not infrequently employed menacing language to the generals for failure to act or win success. To such an intimation coming from the truculent General Halleck, who professed to speak in the name of the President, General Rosecrans replied in words becoming the Roman Brutus, "To threats of removal and the like I must be permitted

³⁵Ibid II. p. 562.

³⁶Rhodes, *History of the U. S.* IV, pp. 111, 161.

to say that I am insensible" (Ropes, *Story of the Civil War*, II. p. 422.) The dreadful massacre of Burnside's troops at Fredericksburg is ascribed to his orders to that unfortunate general, who was visited by Lincoln in his encampment shortly before the battle. "It was a disaster unmatched by McDowell or McClellan. Burnside went to Washington and resigned forthwith, though he nobly kept the President's responsibility to himself." (Dr. Wm. E. Dodd, *Lincoln or Lee*, p. 87; and see statement of Major W. Roy Mason in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol iii, p. 101)

If there is any truth in the claim that Lincoln grew to be a better strategist than Grant or Thomas,³⁷ his value to the war was of little account since it is also said that towards the end of the war, when this astonishing development occurred, he learned to leave his generals to their own wishes.

As to the domestic history of the administrations of the two presidents he must be prejudiced indeed to detect anything like weakness or instability in John Tyler. On the death of Harrison the Whig cabinet and Whig managers wanted to treat him as "Vice-President acting as President". But he overruled them in a moment, and permanently settled the tenure of all the vice-presidents that have subsequently succeeded to the office and functions of President. Subsequently, when the Whigs in Congress brought to him, with the worst faith possible, two measures, not only violatory of the Constitution but of practical good sense, he used his veto—twice repeated in both cases—at the risk of standing alone. One of these measures was a National Bank,³⁸ which was a great private monopoly of all the immense revenues of the government, (wholly unlike the present excellent Federal Banking System,) and the other a tariff in which the Whigs had incorporated a provision for the distribution of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands, thus uniting two contradictory things and making the measure both a tax measure and an appropriation bill.

³⁷This is seriously asserted by C. A. Dana in his "Recollections"; but see John C. Ropes' opinion of Lincoln in his *Story of the Civil War*.

³⁸Carl Schurz, no friend of Tyler, declares in his *Life of Henry Clay* that "the impartial verdict of history will probably be that in vetoing the Bank bills Tyler rendered his country a valuable service".

The friends of Lincoln make no profession that he had any knowledge of finance,³⁹ but Daniel Webster eulogized Tyler's substitute for the Bank called "The Exchequer", which Tyler prepared with his own hand, as "second" only in promise to the Constitution itself!⁴⁰ This was the highest praise that the great Webster ever accorded to any man or any measure. In striking contrast, Lincoln has to his credit no constructive measure of any kind.

The Exchequer was defeated by a partisan Congress, and the finances of the country remained in Tyler's private keeping during his whole term without any loss to the government, and, in his management of the public expenditures, the same great authority declared⁴¹ that "he was remarkably cautious, exact and particular."

The contrast afforded in the honesty of the two administrations is startling. During the period of the war 1861-1865, vice reared its head everywhere. So fearful were these corruptions that Congress was fairly shamed into investigating them and denouncing them, and a Republican paper declared that the thousand page report which was made by a committee was "a record of infamy." No doubt a great deal of this corruption was inseparable from a condition of war with such vast expenditures, but much of it was undoubtedly due to Lincoln's admitted want of care in money matters and laziness. John Hay, who was Lincoln's private secretary, says that the President was extremely "unmethodical", and that he signed without reading them the letters that Hay wrote in his name (Letter in Herndon, *Life of Lincoln* III. p. 515).

In Tyler's time there were no public defaulters worth the name, no corrupt army contracts, and nothing resembling the dreadful scandals of Lincoln's administration—a result which may be largely attributed to the President's close supervision of all the departments. To which it may be added in Mr. Tyler's own words that "in the receipts and disbursement of more than \$100,000,000.00 the government sustained no loss whatever—a fact betokening more vigilance than that bestowed by an individual over his private affairs."

³⁹Stephenson, *Lincoln*, p. 291.

⁴⁰*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 133.

⁴¹Curtis. *Webster*, II. p. 275.

Instead of building up a colossal debt like Lincoln, Tyler reduced the one that came to him and administered the government on one-fourth less expense than his predecessor Mr. Van Buren.⁴²

I have to omit many other matters of domestic concern in which Mr. Tyler set an example, but the question afforded by Dorr's Rebellion must not be forgotten. In this matter it was the first time that the Federal Government had interfered in the affairs of a state. The care which characterized his action in the employment of the Federal troops contrasted with Lincoln's high-handed methods in the Northern States, which were not in rebellion, and evoked from Webster the declaration that it was "worthy of all praise". "The case was new", he wrote,⁴³ "and it was managed with equal discretion and firmness."

How Tyler closed his administration we may learn from the disinterested evidence of Charles H. Raymond, the Texan representative at Washington, in a confidential letter to his government: "The diplomatic corps waited on the President this morning at the White House. He has had much opposition and many difficulties to encounter, and yet no President has closed his term with the affairs of the nation in a more prosperous condition than they are at this moment."

The relations of the two presidents to cabinet affairs should be noticed. Lincoln allowed his cabinet officers a free rein, and the accounts teem with the insubordinate actions of Seward, Stanton and Chase, to say nothing of Welles. Stanton and Chase revelled in insults to Lincoln, and Lincoln is nevertheless praised for sinking himself for the good of the country. This excuse for their retention might pass, if there were absolutely no other men capable of performing their duties, but this is absurd. There were plenty of men in the North of ability enough to take their places.

What were the relations of Mr. Tyler and his Cabinet? He had some of the greatest men of the age among his advisers—such as Daniel Webster, Abel P. Upshur, John C. Spencer and John C. Calhoun, and nothing exists to show that while in office they

⁴²*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. pp. 374, 378, 398. See *Appendix*; Tyler, *Parties and Patronage in the United States*, p. 91.

⁴³*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 199.

did not treat him with utmost respect. Nothing passed of any importance in any department without being first submitted to the President, and receiving his approval. The most deferential of all was perhaps the great Massachusetts statesman Webster.⁴⁴

Calhoun, as Secretary of State, had more of the initiative than Webster, but when after the rejection of the treaty for the annexation of Texas he proposed to let all negotiations go over to the incoming administration, the President would stand no foolishness, and directed him to proceed without delay with the matters before him, which he did with the important results that developed before the expiration of President Tyler's term.⁴⁵

Like the monks of the twelfth century, Lincoln loved to jockey with words, and his Gettysburg Address has a remarkable rhetorical effect, largely because it assumes as true something that was totally false. That assumption is that, if the South had succeeded, "government of the people, by the people, for the people would have perished from the earth"! As a matter of fact the speech in its real nature was a bad sophism, for all that would have happened would have been the establishment of two governments in the place of one. The United States would have lost some territory, but all the liberties of their people would have remained intact. The loss of territory was all that happened to the British Empire, when the American States, asserting, as the Southern States did in 1861, the immortal right of "self-government," seceded from it in 1776. The British Empire was afterwards stronger than ever.

Lincoln was said to be "superlatively honest", but there is no proof that he was any more honest than any other President. It is impossible to believe that Lincoln did not know the facts concerning the origin of our Union and the principle of self-gov-

⁴⁴Mr. Tyler in his beautiful address "The Dead of the Cabinet" referred to Webster as follows: "It was a great charm of life to be associated with one not only so richly endowed with the gifts of mind, but who was so tolerant in matters of opinion and whose entire deportment was so deferential and respectful—a deference and respect which he never for a moment lost sight of."

⁴⁵*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. pp. 330, 331, 393.

ernment expressed in the Declaration of Independence. And yet his first inaugural address and his special message to Congress in July, 1861 are scarcely more than a collection of plausible falsehoods, without any historical support. In creating sophistries, what Seward said of him, according to his friend Don Piatt, was true, that he had "a cunning amounting to genius."

Often Lincoln's attempt to play with words rendered his sophisms grotesque and ridiculous, and such was his argument about the debts⁴⁶ of the Union in his special message of July, 1861, and such his stunt as to the admission of West Virginia in 1864.⁴⁷ No more unholy or wicked measure was ever devised. After a thorough examination of the facts Dr. James C. McGregor in his *Disruption of Virginia* states his conviction that that measure was not only not necessary for the prosecution of the war, but that it was not desired by more than a small minority of the people of West Virginia. The tearing away of territory is the most serious offence that can be committed against a State, and France never forgave Germany for seizing Alsace and Lorraine.

Every one of Lincoln's argument in favor of the freedom of the slaves had an equal application to the States in secession. Why were they not equally entitled to their freedom and independence?

Tyler was a good letter writer, and his address on "The Dead of the Cabinet" has few equals. Granting that, Tyler could not have written Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, it is also true that he could not have written, at any period of his life, the indecent letter⁴⁸ which Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Browning concerning a lady to whom he had proposed and by whom he had been rejected, nor could he

⁴⁶Lincoln said: "If one state may secede, so may another, and when all shall secede none is left to pay the debts of the Union". Any schoolboy could have told him that the States could have been obligated to pay the debts, even if all did secede.

⁴⁷This stunt was: "It is said that the admission of West Virginia is secession and only tolerated because it is our secession. Well, if we call it by that name, there is still difference enough between secession against the constitution and secession for the constitution."

⁴⁸Lamon, *Life of Lincoln*, pp. 180-182; Nicolay and Hay, *Works of Abraham Lincoln*.



PRIVATE DAVID GARDINER TYLER, C. S. A., 1864
Age 18 years

Eldest son of John Tyler by his second marriage with Julia Gardiner
Member of the College Company, Washington College, 1862-1864
Private in the Rockbridge Artillery, 1864-1865

Presidential elector, 1888
State Senator, 1891-1892, 1899-1904
U. S. House of Representatives, 1893-1897
Judge State Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Court, 1904-1928

have written any letter like that which Lincoln wrote to General Grant in February, 1865, asking that his son, aged 22, who had been kept at Harvard College, despite the draft, should be put on his staff and "not in the ranks."⁴⁹ Tyler had four grandsons, privates in the Confederate Army, one of whom was killed and another wounded, and two sons by his second marriage who surrendered at Appomattox aged 16 and 18.

How can it be doubted that the duty of a citizen to his country was better expressed by Tyler than by Lincoln? In 1847 Lincoln proposed the "Spot resolutions" and denounced the war then being fought with Mexico. In 1846, when war was imminent with Great Britain, Tyler, while deprecating hostilities as "the greatest of calamities", wrote: "Should we be found at war, then every man should do his duty and God forbid that son of mine should prove recreant". In 1847, in the matter of the Mexican war, he wrote: "In a conflict with a foreign power it is the duty of one and all to stand by the country. Even if the war be improper in its inception, there is no other mode by which we can get out of it with honor". His son, Col. Robert Tyler raised a volunteer regiment in Pennsylvania and offered it to the government in the Mexican war.

When in 1861-65 men and newspapers in the North complained of Lincoln's war with the South, Lincoln, forgetful of his course in 1847, suppressed the newspapers and threw his critics into jail.

John Quincy Adams had little use for Southern slave owners, but confessed in his *Memoirs* that Tyler's Texas move was marked with "equal intrepidity and address". Alexander H. Stephens was an opponent of Tyler in Congress, but, in his character as historian, he said⁵⁰ of his State Papers that "they compared favorably in point of ability with those of any of his predecessors". Jefferson Davis declared him "the most felicitous among the orators he had known", a statement which receives support from Justice Baldwin of the Supreme Court, who crossed swords with Mr. Tyler on the Tariff question in 1821, and was so impressed with his elo-

⁴⁹Nicolay and Hay, *Works of Abraham Lincoln*, II. p. 630.

⁵⁰Stephens, *Pictorial History* of the U. S., p. 47.

quence and ability that he came to his seat and predicted that he would reach high station—a prediction, of which he never failed to remind Mr. Tyler as he rose from step to step in political preferment.⁵¹ His great speech against the tariff in 1832 made a profound impression upon Ex-President Madison and Chief-Justice Marshall, who both wrote to him in terms of high commendation.⁵²

Coming down to more personal matters how is it possible to associate Tyler with the filthy stories ascribed to Lincoln by his friends, many of which are said to have been unprintable. If anyone would take refuge in the hope that the responsibilities of his high office raised Lincoln above this habit of indecency, they are met by authentic accounts of his grossly unseemly behavior as President and by the evidence of Lamon, the closest associate of his lifetime, that his indulgence in gross jokes and stories was “restrained by no presence and no occasion”. Chandler, in his *Life of Governor Andrew*, repeats a story how the war governor of Massachusetts in pressing a matter upon Lincoln when President, was put off with a smutty joke, and Hugh McCulloch is a witness to the unrefined language of the President in a story contest with Randall, his Postmaster General, after the report of Sheridan’s victory in the Valley of Virginia was received. (Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 419)

When Butler issued at New Orleans his notorious order No. 28, which Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister of England, denounced in the British Parliament “as unfit to be written in the English language,” Lincoln had a fine opportunity, to show his sense of decency, by revoking the order. But he did not do so, and on the contrary promoted Butler to responsible positions and wanted him as his running mate for the vice presidency in 1864. And yet Butler is the man who, Dr. John Fiske declared, “could not have understood in the smallest degree the feelings of gentlemen”.

Nor does it require any studied argument to make a Christian

⁵¹*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I. p. 334.

⁵²*Ibid* I. p. 439.

of John Tyler, as it does of Lincoln. As a member of the Episcopal Church he talked the language of Jesus. When he was solicited to help the son of one of his political persecutors he said,⁵³ "I would seek no sweeter revenge over my enemies than to do them favors."

Kindness and gentle words were natural to him. When he learned of the death of Mr. Clay, who had led the Whigs in all the attacks upon him, he wrote as follows:⁵⁴ "Yes, my dear Sir, Mr. Clay has paid the great debt of nature which we are all sooner or later to be obliged to pay. He did me great wrong and caused thousands to entertain opinions of me which had no foundation in truth; but in doing so he was madly ambitious, and while injuring me he did more serious and lasting injury to his fame. History is the impartial arbiter to decide between us, and to her decision I fearlessly submit myself. My feelings of anger towards him are all buried in the grave. We were once intimate, and I had a warm attachment and admiration for him; but he broke the silver chord with a reckless hand, and his arm became too short to reach the golden fruit for which he gave up friendship and everything." In Shakespeare's golden words he found the favorite advice which he imparted to his children in his letters: "Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace to silence envious tongues."

He was noted as a merciful master, and there was a mutual love between him and his slaves. There is no evidence that Lincoln had ever more than a theoretic regard for the freedom of the negroes, and his Emancipation measure was only a war measure, forced upon him by the Radicals in his party, who threatened to withhold supplies for the war if he did not issue it. (James C. Welling in Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 533) Mr. Tyler looked to the future for the peaceful abolition of slavery,⁵⁵

⁵³*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 265.

⁵⁴*Ibid* II. p. 499.

⁵⁵In 1847 he wrote: "Climate should be left to determine the question of slavery, as it will most assuredly. It has already abolished it as far as Delaware, and if left to work out the result will at no distant day produce similar effects on Delaware, Maryland and Virginia." *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 479.

and in 1832 as a member of a committee for the Senate he drew a code for the District of Columbia which proposed to eliminate the slave trade and ameliorate the condition of the negroes in the District in many ways. Lincoln once figured as attorney for a man who claimed a runaway slave as his property.⁵⁶ There is no evidence that John Tyler ever figured in such a case, but, as he states, he often appeared as attorney without pay in his own State for negroes suing for freedom.⁵⁷

As to his general appearance the famous Charles Dickens, who saw him in 1842, wrote⁵⁸ of his "mild and pleasant appearance" and "his remarkably unaffected, gentlemanly and agreeable manners", and added that "in his whole carriage and demeanor he became his station singularly well."

Quite in contrast was the description⁵⁹ of Lincoln by Col. Theodore Lyman of Massachusetts, an officer on General Meade's staff, who saw Lincoln not long before his death: "There was an expression of plebeian vulgarity in his face. You recognize the recounter of coarse stories."

There could be no two weightier witnesses than Dickens and Lyman. Dickens was a stranger and disinterested, and Lyman was a cultivated Federal officer, friendly to Lincoln.

LYON G. TYLER

⁵⁶Stephenson, *Lincoln*, p. 76.

⁵⁷Letter to H. S. Foote in *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II. p. 489.

⁵⁸Dickens, *American Notes*.

⁵⁹*Meade's Headquarters*, p. 324.

APPENDIX

Note upon Secession (Ante p. 22)

Lincoln made the preservation of the Union his justification of a destructive war on the South, and in doing so logically condemned George Washington, who broke the integrity of the British nation in defence of self-government of the American Colonies. The majority of Northern writers, since 1865, notably J. F. Rhodes, as if conscious of the weakness of Lincoln's position, have made the effort to side-track the principle of self-determination by emphasizing slavery as the cause of the war. Thus Rhodes, in his *History*, uses this language: "The cause of the war was slavery, the South fought to preserve and extend it. The North fought to repress and further restrict it." This statement he has the impudence to make in face of another that "the objects mentioned were avowed by neither side". In answer, the cause of the war was not slavery, for there would have been no war had Lincoln not denied the right of self-determination. Nor did the South fight to preserve and extend slavery, for had Lincoln withdrawn the troops from Fort Sumter and recognized the independence of the Confederacy, the Southerners would have done no fighting at all. Indeed, by secession the Southerners deliberately gave up the chief bone of contention with the North, the right of taking their slaves into the territories and thereby extending slavery.

Indeed, if Rhodes' interpretation of the war is correct, Lincoln, in repeatedly denying that he was fighting to free the slaves, must appear as either lacking in sense or sincerity—a fool or a hypocrite. But it is not correct.

Nor was slavery the cause of secession, for slavery was antecedent to the Constitution and coexistent with the Federal Union. It was undoubtedly the *intemperate agitation* in the North against the South, added to the numberless past grievances, that prepared the way for secession. But the actual secession turned in the Cotton States upon the election of a sectional president on a platform that defied the Supreme Court, and in Virginia and the other border States upon the unconstitutionality of Lincoln's resolve to coerce the seceding States. And as for the matter of war, there is overwhelming evidence that Lincoln's final determination turned, not upon secession, nor upon slavery, nor upon preserving the Union, but upon the tariff. "What will become of my tariff if I allow the Southern States, with their ten cent tariff to go?" was the question asked by him on three several occasions. It was currently feared that, as a result of the low tariff of the South, that section would become the ruling power in North America, and "grass would grow in the streets of New York".

Secession and war had nothing in common, although every effort has been made by Northern writers to confound the two. Secession was a mere civil procedure and involved no violence, and it depended upon Lincoln whether he would have war or not.

The linking of slavery with secession and war is merely an effort to obscure the issue—"a red herring drawn across the trail". How can it be denied that, whatever the occasion of secession, the primary object of the South on seceding was to shake off all connection with the North? There was no time during the war that the South would not have stopped fighting if its independence had been recognized, and for independence the South was prepared to sacrifice even their slaves, as was shown by the mission of Duncan F. Kenner to England, towards the close of the war, for recognition with the promise of freedom to the slaves. What makes Lincoln especially censurable, from his own or any other standpoint, was his involving the country in a great war without calling Congress to get its consent.

Mr. Tyler's Care of the Finances (p. 29)

Jefferson Davis gives a remarkable instance of Mr. Tyler's honesty. Mr. Webster became involved in charges in 1846 respecting the secret service fund, and Mr. Tyler went to Washington to defend his former Secretary of State. He appeared before the Senate Committee and absolved Mr. Webster from all responsibility by assuming all blame, if there was any, to himself. Mr. Davis, who was a member of the committee, records:

"The Ex-President declined the offer of the book containing the list of warrants drawn against the fund, saying that he was willing to state all that he could remember, but did not desire any aid to his memory. He then recited the warrants drawn, giving the name and amount in each case, and thus covered all which the record contained. It seemed to me such an extraordinary exhibition of memory that I took occasion to remark upon it, when he modestly replied that supposing those disbursements would never be inquired into he had felt more than the ordinary weight of responsibility in regard to them, and could not probably have so well remembered the expenditure of any other fund." (*Letters and Times of the Tylers* III, p. 183.)

Lincoln's "Nice Utterances" (p. 23)

Lincoln said in his Second Inaugural "with malice to none and charity to all", but was there not a touch of malice and an absence of all charity when in almost the same breath he stressed the lash in connection with slavery and declared that the negro had no requital for his service of 250 years?

It is a remarkable fact that the government which freed the slaves, tried to incite them to insurrection and actually placed them above their masters, uses today the same argument for keeping the Filipinos under political duress which the slave owners used for keeping the negroes in slavery. *They are not fit to act for themselves and must be trained.* Just lately Henry L. Stimson, Governor of the Philippine Islands, stressed the view, in his inaugural address, that "only through industrial and economic progress could a larger measure of self-government be obtained". It has been well said by an accurate writer, Paul S. Whitcomb, that "the first need of a backward race is not liberty but discipline, and labor is the greatest disciplinarian known" (Whitcomb, "Lincoln and Democracy" in *Tyler's Quarterly Hist. and Gen. Mag.* vol. IX, pp. 1-33).

Lincoln's Arguments in Favor of Freedom for the Slaves (p. 32)

In Lincoln's Missouri compromise speech he said: "I trust I understand and truly estimate the right of self-government. * * * When the white man governs himself that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that of despotism." Why was it not equally true that when the people of the North govern themselves that is self-government, but when they govern themselves and also govern the people of the South that is more than self-government—that is despotism. To assert that the Southern States could not secede was the same as asserting that a negro could sell himself into slavery. No contract of any kind can be made perpetual, and Lord Blackburn, an English jurist, has reasoned that to deny a stockholder the right to sell his shares is tantamount to confiscation (Whitcomb, *Lincoln and Democracy*).

Was Lincoln Kind? (p. 23)

Northern writers have become ashamed of the way the South has been treated, and they have magnified some vague words of Lincoln into an assurance of a course of kindness to the South, had he survived the war. As a matter of fact, no other President said so many unkind things of the South. Thus Lincoln's second inaugural has been greatly exploited, but, if relieved of its sophistical rhetoric, it contains a scandalous misrepresentation. He said, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Plainly stated this is a charge that the negroes were inhumanly treated by Southerners and received no recompense for their labor. As a matter of fact, the negroes were the most spoiled domestics in the world, "The negro was the beneficiary, rather than the victim of slavery, as Booker T. Washington has admitted. Lincoln's talk about 'unrequited toil' ignores the fact that the condition of the negro was better under slavery than it was in Africa, it ignores the fact that, as compared with white laborers of equal mentality, he was not deprived of any substantial rights, it ignores the economic and social status of so-called free labor which bordered closely upon serfdom, and it ignores the contribution of management to production. The probability is that the negro received at least as great a share in proportion to what he contributed to production, as did the technically free Northern laborer. In any event Civil War was no more a legitimate remedy for slavery than were the reputedly revolutionary methods of the I. W. W. a proper remedy for the wrongs inflicted upon free labor by Northern capitalists." (Paul S. Whitcomb in *Lincoln and Democracy*, Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, IX. p. 18.)

Again the term "rebel" as applied to the Americans by the British was resented because it was made to imply not merely a political crime but a moral one (Graydon's *Memoirs*). Lincoln outdid the British, and described the Southerners as "*insurgent rebels*, who have been so long waging a cruel war against the government of the United States for its overthrow" (Proclamation September 3, 1864). Of course, the government of the United States would not have been overthrown by the success of the South, any more than the British government was overthrown by the success of the Americans. The spirit of Lincoln is seen in another proclamation, July 7, 1864, in which he appointed a day of prayer to soften the hearts of the Rebels, and cause them to lay down their arms "that they may not be utterly destroyed". Rather than lose the war which would have ruined him politically, there can be no doubt that Lincoln would have consented to the entire annihilation of the Southern people, men, women and children.

Not the least evil of Lincoln's example was his putting rhetoric ahead of truth. Contributors to newspapers and magazines write more for effect than for fact. Was Lincoln kind?

Beveridge and Lincoln.

Hon. A. J. Beveridge set out to write a monumental Life of Lincoln, but death overtook him ere he completed his work. Two volumes, however, have appeared covering the early part of Lincoln's Life. This is an accurate summary of their contents by Major Rupert Hughes, published in the *Chicago Tribune* for December 8, 1928:

"Beveridge alleges (and, what is more, proves) that Lincoln's father did not picturesquely oppose the boy's study; that Lincoln's love affair with Ann Rutledge was carried on while she was really engaged to another man; that he did not acquit a client by the use of the wrong almanac; that he was not greatly excited over slavery till well on in life; that he appeared as attorney for a slave-holder trying to drag a chattel back across the border; that he was a machine politician who was more ambitious than conscientious; that he used anonymous letters lavishly in his campaigns and when challenged to a duel by a man he defamed thus, not only broke the law by accepting the challenge, but violated all codes by insisting on a weapon that left his brave and honorable opponent at a fatal disadvantage.

"Furthermore, Beveridge proves that Lincoln advocated the Mexican war when it meant his election, then, after getting to congress, made such speeches against the prosecution of it that his own constituents called him "dastardly" and "a Benedict Arnold" and he dared not go home till after the hostility died out. Beveridge shows that none of Lincoln's family voted for or sided with him, and that he did not like his own father. He is pictured as slipshod and slovenly and shiftless, yet shifty in principles to such an appalling degree that some of his debts are still unpaid. There was so much dirt in one corner of his office that weeds grew up in it.

"He verifies beyond dispute Lincoln's passion for funny stories, particularly for dirty ones; he describes a "repellent" poem he wrote, a salacious wedding burlesque too indecent to quote, proves that he kept a liquor store, that he had no love for beauty, and never got on well with women.

"Like Carl Sandburg, Beveridge gives the evidence that Lincoln's reason for suddenly putting off his wedding was the intensely unromantic, however dramatic, discovery that he was in need of medical treatment and asserts that Lincoln's melancholias verging on insanity were due to this mishap. He presents Mrs. Lincoln as a half mad savage, a she wolf and a miser.

"These and a thousand other details of this astounding biography have not stirred a ripple in the news columns, though tornadoes of wrath have greeted others who have disclosed far less about other heroes and heroines.

"But Lincoln has always been chosen for our homely hero and everybody welcomes anything that makes him homelier. This Beveridge does with amazing success, marching through the records and knocking over many even of the homeliest legends.

"Such manifest truth is in everything he compiles that he has silenced even those peculiar people who believe in telling lies about our statesmen in order to build up ideals for the young."





